OTO-HNS Telework Guidelines

Policy Contact: otohr@uw.edu

Summary

Telework is the ability for a professional or classified staff employee to work at a remote location while retaining the flexibility to meet the work needs of the department. Teleworking, by working from home or another location, provides relief from commuting, allows for flexibility, and can facilitate uninterrupted time for focused concentration. Teleworking is a benefit rather than a right which can be terminated at any time by either the employee or the supervisor. Teleworking requires clear and on-going communication between the employee and the supervisor as well as a mutual understanding of work expectations and outcomes. Productivity, work schedule and communication expectations remain the same when working remotely.

History

The University recognizes two general types of telework arrangements: regular telework and occasional telework. Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, the department used occasional telework on a case-by-case basis to provide employee flexibility or allow for work from home during campus closures (due to severe weather for example). During the pandemic, the department moved to regular telework for the majority of staff per University guidelines. Post-pandemic and in response to overall shifts towards more remote work, the department will allow eligible employees to apply for a regular telework schedule that includes working remotely up to 2 days/week.

Definitions and References

- UW Telework policy https://hr.uw.edu/returntowork/telework-policies-and-agreements/telework-policy/
- Telework Agreement template https://hr.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Telework-Plan-Agreement-Hybrid-Occasional-20210902.docx

Eligibility

- Department employees in good standing (per supervisor) may request a regular telework schedule with up to 2 days of remote work per week for full-time employees, and up to 1 day of remote work per week for part-time employees.
- For new employees, consider a trial basis of one-month to determine the long-term feasibility of the telework arrangement.
- Each employee and their manager will determine the feasibility of remote working by reviewing (1) the operational needs of the worksite, and (2) each individual's overall job responsibilities.

Application

- Upon supervisor approval, a draft telework agreement should be submitted to otohr@uw.edu for review. HR will review the draft agreement with the supervisor and determine if any changes are needed. If approved, HR will route for signatures and send a copy to both the employee and supervisor. Criteria for approval will include:

- o   Enough detail is included in the plan to evaluate
- o   Schedule does not overlap with other staff in similar roles
- o   Does not place undue burden on colleagues or overall department operations

Termination

- Telework schedule can be modified or terminated by the employee or supervisor at any time.

Telework Expectations

Hours

- Unless otherwise approved by the supervisor, telework hours should conform with regularly scheduled work hours.

Communication

- Telework days should be identified in email signature
- Employees engaging in telework should be at least as responsive to email and other forms of communication as when present in the office.
- The department Slack site should be used to reach colleagues for quick questions/answers: https://app.slack.com/client/T010LPF103F/D010P7D7XV3
- When teleworking, employees should forward calls and/or use the voicemail email notification system.
- Regular meetings should proceed as planned, including 1:1s
- Continue to use Zoom for all meetings so anyone can attend regardless of work location

Schedule

- Rituals – While teleworking, touching base via check-ins or daily updates is encouraged.
- On-Site Requirements – If in-person presence is requested for an important meeting or event that falls on a scheduled telework day, the employee is expected to come in. Supervisors should specify which meetings and trainings require in-person attendance in advance.
- Flexibility – If temporary or permanent modifications to the telework schedule are needed; the employee or supervisor should provide as much notice as possible

Equipment

- OTO HR should be notified of any equipment needs to assist in telework but it should not be an expectation that the department equip an employee with a home office. Most teleworking employees connect and work using their personal equipment.
- Employees are responsible for the care of any department equipment provided to facilitate remote work. All equipment must be returned in good condition upon termination of employment.

Support

- Accessibility and Tech Support– Connecting via HuskyOnNet (Big IP Edge Client) gives full access to work systems and folders. Contact csshelp@uw.edu for issues with VPN connection, folder access, software/hardware.
- Engagement – Staying engaged with colleagues is important for unit cohesiveness. Staying connected via Zoom, Slack and other tools is encouraged. For health and welfare support, reach out to others on a regular basis to check-in.